CITY OF READING, OHIO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – LEGISLATIVE SESSION
JUNE 16, 2026 – 7:30 PM

For the full detail of this evening's Council Meeting, please visit www.watchreadingohio.com.

CALL TO ORDER
President of Council, Mr. Mattscheck called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
President of Council, Mr. Mattscheck led those in attendance in a prayer and then the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL
Council Members Present: Mr. Powell, Mr. Bronner, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Boehner, Mrs. Kroeger, & Mrs. Eadicicco.
Motion to excuse Mr. Thamann made by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger. Motion carried by voice vote.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA
Motion made by Mrs. Kroeger, seconded by Mrs. Eadicicco, to add the PPE ordinance to the agenda for the evening. Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion made by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mrs. Eadicicco to amend the agenda to add an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the disposition of unneeded Municipal Property. Motion carried by voice vote.

OTHER CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:
Mayor Bo Bemmes, Law Director Dave Stevenson & Clerk of Council Carla Bronner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NONE
GUEST SPEAKERS: NONE

AUDIENCE ASKING PARTICIPATION:
(1) Bob Wimmers: Addressed Council regarding the proposed Reading Road project, noting that Reading Road has two distinctly different traffic patterns that should be considered separately.

Section 1: Cooper Road to Gahl Terrace
According to Mr. Wimmers, this section experiences the majority of speeding problems due to several factors: Sparse traffic, few feeder roads, limited commercial activity and only one traffic signal.

Mr. Wimmers suggested installing three speed bumps on each side of the roadway, explaining that a series of properly spaced speed bumps effectively discourages speeding. As an example, the speaker cited Thurnridge Drive, where similar traffic-calming measures have reportedly eliminated a previous speeding problem.

Section 2: Gahl Terrace to Galbraith Road
Mr. Wimmers described this section as having a much different traffic pattern, characterized by:
Traffic signals, heavy traffic volume, significant traffic entering from feeder roads, frequent turning movements and numerous crosswalks

Mr. Wimmers expressed concern that the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) proposed solution would not work effectively because the two sections of Reading Road operate so differently. While slowing traffic in one area may be possible, doing so could create congestion in the other.

(2) Sue Renderle: Encouraged the city to consider bringing back summer concerts. Mrs. Renderle noted attending a recent concert in Blue Ash, where attendance was very strong, and suggested that booking well-known local bands could provide an opportunity for residents of all ages to come together and enjoy community events. Mrs. Renderle

also volunteered to help organize the concerts and suggested using available Parks and Recreation funding while seeking sponsorships to offset costs.

Mrs. Renderle also asked several questions regarding the Reading Road "road diet" survey, including:
Whether the survey results would be made public, whether another public meeting with ODOT would be held and when Council would vote on the proposal.

Katie Eadicicco Response: The survey results have recently been received and will likely be discussed later in the meeting. Regarding summer concerts, the idea falls under Mr. Thamann's Recreation committee and she's sure he would be open to discussing it further upon his return. Mrs. Eadicicco also explained that discussions with ODOT are underway to schedule another meeting, although no official date has been established. ODOT requested a decision by July 13, but Council is seeking additional time because any formal action would require a resolution. No final decision has been made regarding the project.

Mayor Bo Bemmes Response: The Reading Parks Foundation sponsored fireworks the day before Memorial Day and will also sponsor fireworks at 10:00 p.m. on July 4. The Parks Foundation is sponsoring a live band performance at Koenig Park on July 4. The Mayor expressed support for expanding the city's summer concert offerings, noting that while similar concerts were held in previous years and attendance eventually declined, there is interest in bringing them back. Residents were encouraged to suggest local bands for future performances. The July 4 concert is expected to begin around 6:00 p.m. and conclude before the fireworks begin at 10:00 p.m.

Andy Bronner Response: Announced that the University of Cincinnati Band will perform at Koenig Park on June 24th. The performance will feature patriotic music and was recommended as a high-quality community event.

COMMUNICATIONS:

(1) Division of Liquor Control

We received a letter from the Ohio Division of Liquor control wanting to know if we request a hearing for the transfer of the "Asken LLC, Augies Tavern" to be transferred to the "Augies Tavern LLC, Augies Tavern" both for the same address of 201 Walnut Street, 1st Floor & Basement, Reading, Ohio 45215. Council did not wish to request a hearing, but advised to forward to the Interim Chief of Police, Daniel Flottemesch.

(2) Today is former Reading Saftey Service Director and Ward 4 Councilman, Denny Albrinck's 81st birthday! Today is also Councilman, Andy Bronner's birthday! Happy Birthday to both!

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion made by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger, to enter Executive Session at 7:40 pm, for the purpose of discussing the disposition of unneeded Municipal Property. Motion carried by a 6-0 roll call vote.

Motion made by Mr. Boehner, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger, to come back from Executive Session at 8:02 pm. Motion carried by a 6-0 roll call vote.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

READING OF RESOLUTIONS:

(1) A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO REVOKE A REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION PROVIDED TO GIVAUDAN FLAVORS CORPORATION.

Motion made by Mrs. Eadicicco, seconded by Mr. Bronner, to suspend the rule that requires a second & third reading. Motion carried by a 6-0 roll call vote. Motion made by Mrs. Kroeger, seconded by Mrs. Eadicicco to adopt the resolution. Motion carried by a 6-0 roll call vote.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED **RESOLUTION NUMBER 2026-18R**

READING OF ORDINANCES:

(1) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING COMPENSATION TO BRYAN EDENS FOR ACCRUED SICK TIME.

Ordinance was declared a "first reading" only.

(2) THE FOLLOWING BUDGET FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2027 HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY COUNCIL AND IS HEREBY SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSION.

Ordinance was declared a "first reading" only.

Public Hearing for the 2027 Budget will be held during the July 7, 2026 Council Meeting.

(3) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR TO PURCHASE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Ordinance was declared a "first reading" only.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

(1) Bo Bemmes:

- July 4, 2026, American Legion hosting the Festival and the Fireworks will begin at 10:00 pm (paid for by the Reading Parks Foundation)
- Asked for prayers for former Fire Chief Kevin Kaiser who is battling cancer.

(2) Katie Eadicicco: Provided an update on the results of the recent ODOT survey, which received 375 responses, representing what was considered a strong level of public participation.

The survey responses were as follows:

- 68.5% strongly oppose the proposal.
- 9.19% oppose the proposal.
- 8.92% are neutral or indicated either option was acceptable.
- 7.09% support the proposal.
- 6.3% strongly support the proposal.

Noted that the results were informative and that the written comments generally reflected the concerns and opinions expressed during previous public discussions. All comments have been reviewed by Council.

Mrs. Eadicicco also provided an update regarding discussions with ODOT. The city was recently contacted by ODOT with a request for Council to vote on the proposal by July 13. Council is concern that the timeline is very short, particularly since only one Council meeting is scheduled before that date and some Council members are unavailable. The city's administration plans to contact ODOT to request additional time so that Council can instead consider the matter at its second meeting in July. At this time, no extension has been confirmed.

(3) Shelly Kroeger: Presented a check from the VYO to the administration to cover the expenses from the unintentional damage caused at the Memorial Festival at Koenig Park.

(4) Bob Boehner: Shared his observations about public feedback regarding the proposed Reading Road diet. Based on conversations with residents, and approximately 35 to 40 emails received, nearly all feedback opposed the proposal. The only supportive email appeared to come from someone who was an advocate for bicycling.
Mr. Boehner referenced results from the ODOT survey, noting that 66.3% of the 375 respondents believed the Reading Road diet would make traffic flow "much worse." He emphasized that this concern was consistent among business owners, residents, and others familiar with the area. Concerns were raised that reducing Reading Road to one northbound lane and one southbound lane would create significant congestion. It was also noted that buses

would continue to stop in traffic, further affecting vehicle flow, and there was skepticism that the proposed design would function effectively.

Mr. Boehner stated that he was prepared to make a motion to reject the Reading Road diet proposal if another member was willing to second the motion.

Mrs. Eadicicco explained that Patrick would prepare a formal resolution for consideration. Once presented, the council could vote on the resolution. If the council chose not to act, the proposal would not move forward. Likewise, if the resolution failed to receive sufficient support, the proposal would be considered rejected and the council's position would be reflected in the official record.

(5) Dave Powell: Asked whether the outdoor dining area fencing surrounding the Winey Bride had been removed. It was stated that the property owners had already been notified and confirmed they would ensure the fencing was removed. Mr. Powell remarked that, since the business had ceased operations, removing the fencing was appropriate.

(6) Mark Bishop:

- Commented on the results of the Reading Road diet survey, noting that approximately 30% of respondents supported the installation of raised crosswalks. A similar percentage also agreed that additional safety improvements are needed for both pedestrians and motorists along Reading Road.

- The Utilities, Lands, and Buildings Committee will meet on July 7 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss a proposal from the Reconnecting Communities group. Representatives from the organization will attend to present their proposal, and additional information is expected to be available before the meeting.

- The city has received notice of Duke Energy's proposed natural gas distribution rate increase. It was clarified that the proposal affects only the distribution (delivery) portion of customers' natural gas bills and would apply equally to all customers, regardless of whether they purchase their gas through Duke Energy or an alternative supplier.

After reviewing the proposal, Mr. Bishop explained the potential impact on residential customers:

- A residential customer using 120 CCF of natural gas during a winter month would see an estimated increase of $29.16 for that month's distribution charges.
- The proposed increase is approximately 24 cents per CCF.
- Residents can estimate the impact on their own bills by multiplying their gas usage (in CCF) by $0.24.

Because natural gas usage is seasonal, the greatest increase would occur during the winter months. Assuming an average residential customer uses approximately 800 CCF of natural gas annually, the proposed rate increase would add about $192 per year to the average household's natural gas bill. Since the increase applies only to distribution charges, it would be passed on to all customers regardless of their natural gas supplier. Residents with questions about the proposed rate increase were encouraged to contact Duke Energy's Rate Department at 513-287-2576 for additional information.

(7) Andy Bronner: Shared that a resident had provided a flyer regarding the proposed Reading Road diet. Mr. Bronner clarified that the flyer was not produced or distributed by the City.

Several inaccuracies were identified:

- Mr. Bronner's phone number listed on the flyer was incorrect. The correct number is **513-733-8120**.
- The email address listed on the flyer was confirmed to be accurate.
- The illustration on the flyer incorrectly depicted bicycle lanes as part of the proposal. The current Reading Road diet plan does **not** include bike lanes.

Despite these inaccuracies, Mr. Bronner expressed appreciation for residents' efforts to raise public awareness about the proposal.

Since the previous meeting, Mr. Bronner reported receiving three additional emails regarding the proposal, including one expressing support for the project. The supporter cited the wider travel lanes as a benefit. Mr. Bronner also shared a personal observation from driving behind a bus earlier that day, noting the need to move toward the center line to pass safely.

Mr. Bronner pointed to recent temporary lane closures on Reading Road as examples of how traffic has continued to move without significant delays.

Examples included:

- A northbound lane closure that remained in place for several days.
- Ongoing roadwork near the library that required another lane closure.

According to Mr. Bronner, neither situation resulted in noticeable traffic backups. These observations were offered as evidence that concerns about severe congestion under the proposed roadway configuration may be overstated.

Mr. Bronner stated that many comments submitted through the ODOT survey appeared to raise questions that had already been addressed by ODOT representatives or were answered within the publicly available project plans.

He also clarified that the proposal does not require buses to stop in a through lane of traffic. Instead, buses would pull out of the primary travel lane while loading and unloading passengers. However, when buses occupy designated stopping areas adjacent to travel lanes, motorists often change lanes to pass them, creating potential safety concerns. The proposed design was presented as an opportunity to improve those traffic movements.

Mr. Bronner further suggested that public opinion can be influenced by how the project is presented. They stated that conversations based on facts, project details, and open discussion often result in more positive reactions than conversations that begin with negative assumptions. He also expressed skepticism that some critics had fully reviewed the available project information before forming their opinions.

Mayor Bo Bemmes shared a conversation with a commuter who regularly travels north on Reading Road. According to the commuter, northbound traffic in the morning generally moves freely, while afternoon traffic often backs up to the railroad tracks as vehicles queue to turn left onto Columbia Avenue. He explained that much of the congestion is caused by left-turning traffic. Under the proposed design, two dedicated left-turn lanes and additional vehicle stacking space could improve traffic flow at the intersection. After discussing these features, the commuter acknowledged that the proposed configuration might help reduce congestion.

Mr. Bemmes concluded by encouraging continued discussion of the proposal, emphasizing the importance of carefully reviewing the available information before reaching a final decision.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn came from Mrs. Kroeger, and was seconded by Mr. Boehner. Motion carried by voice vote. There being no further business, the meeting was declared adjourned at 8:23 pm.

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Carla Bronner
Clerk of Council

Kevin Mattscheck
President of Council